

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

### ROUTING DATA

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A network interface connectable to a packet-based data network on which a plurality of different types of payload data are distinguished by network-based packet header data; comprises:

a plurality of data handling nodes; and

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a routing arrangement responsive to a packet identifier for routing data packets between the data handling nodes;

in which:

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one of the data handling nodes is a network processor for receiving data packets from and transmitting data packets to the packet-based network; the network processor being operable:

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a) in the case of a data packet received from the data network, to detect the type of payload data from the network-based packet header data; to remove the network-based packet header data from the packet; and to associate with the packet an identifier which specifies a route across the routing arrangement to a target data handling node and a data handling operation to be carried out by the target data handling node; and

b) in the case of a data packet received from another data handling node and having an associated packet identifier, to detect the type of payload data from the packet identifier; to remove the packet identifier; to apply network-based packet header data in dependence on the packet identifier; and to launch the data packet onto the network.

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Figure 4.